

123. THE
Saints' Entrance into Zion.

A
S E R M O N,

OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE REVEREND

MR. MICHAEL BLIGH,

LATE PASTOR OF THE BAPTIST CHURCH, AT
SEVEN-OAKS, IN KENT.

BY JAMES UPTON.

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF
THE LORD'S DEALINGS WITH HIS SOUL,
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

—
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ADVERTISEMENT.

THOSE Persons who heard the ensuing Discourse delivered from the pulpit, will perceive, that it has been very much abridged: which was done in order to introduce that remarkable Account of the Lord's gracious dealings with my late honored Father, which will be found in the appendix. May the Lord condescend to bless the perusal of these pages to many precious and immortal souls!*

* This sermon was preached at Seven-oaks, Oct. 30, 1794, after the body had been interr'd at Bessels Green.



SERMON, &c.

DEAR BRETHREN,

It was the desire of your late Pastor, that I should address you on the present occasion. I therefore ask your serious attention to that part of the sacred word of God recorded in Isaiah xxxv. 10.—*And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

A 2

These

THESE are precious words:—happy are they, who are interested in what they contain! The chapter, out of which they are taken, though but short, is remarkably encouraging. The verses are only *ten*, but they contain more than *twenty* gracious promises. O that the Spirit of God may apply them to our hearts! I shall not detain you by general observations; but proceed to consider the text, as suitable to the present solemn occasion: and endeavour to make such observations as may, with a divine blessing, be useful to your souls. For I wish you, my dear hearers, to be duly apprized of the end I have in view, in engaging in this service. It is not to pass encomiums on my honored Father, though I regarded his counsels, and shall ever revere his memory; But the objects, at which I aim, are the glory of God, and your present and everlasting welfare.—Should the Lord graciously condescend to bless the word that may this evening be spoken to one immortal soul, I shall rejoice, and be truly thankful for it. In the words you will observe,

I. The

I. The description here given us of the people of God—the *ransomed of the Lord*, and,

II. The glorious promise made them, first, that they *shall return to Zion with songs*: and, secondly, that *everlasting joy shall be upon their heads*; and *sorrow and sighing shall flee away*.

We begin,

I. With the description here given of the people of God—the *ransomed of the Lord*, or the *redeemed of the Lord*: for the same idea is meant to be conveyed by each term, as appears from the words of the prophet Jeremiah, *The Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he*. Then follows a promise similar to that in the text. *Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion*^a. But what is the import of the character? This we should be concerned to know. A ransom is a price that is paid, in order to procure pardon for an offence, or liberty and freedom, for per-

^a Jer. xxxi. 11, 12. See also Isai. li. 10, 11.

sons in bondage and slavery. In the former sense, the word is used by Solomon, when cautioning persons against the sin of adultery; and particularly in reference to the unhappy consequences of that dreadful evil. *For jealousy, says he, is the rage of a man: therefore, he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any RANSOM^b:—scarce any price that can be paid will procure forgiveness for the crime, or reconcile the injured husband to the offending party. Both ideas are included when, in the word of Truth, it is applied to Christ, and the important work which he came to perform. The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto; but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many^c. The ransomed of the Lord, therefore, are those persons for whom a price has been paid, to procure pardon for their sins, and deliverance from a state of bondage and misery. To illustrate this, we will notice three ideas:—man's condition—the price paid for his redemption—and the Person by whom it was laid down.*

^b Prov. vi. 34. 35

^c Matth. xx. 28.

First—Man's condition. *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God^d. Every sinner, as such, is in a state of captivity.—Hence it is said, that Christ came to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound^e. Though there are many persons, who have never felt their bondage, nor seen their misery; yet this, by no means proves, that they are not in such circumstances. Our Lord Jesus Christ, on a certain occasion, said to the Jews, *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.* They immediately replied, *We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?* Our Lord's answer is very solemn—*Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin^f.* Christ did not speak in reference to their bodies; but their souls. And what slavery is so dreadful as that which is the consequence of sin? This is infinitely worse than that of*

^d Rom. iii. 23.

^e Isa. lxi. 2.

^f John viii. 31—34.

him

him who groans under the iron hand of a cruel oppressor.

Men, by nature, are in bondage under the law of God, which requires *personal, perfect, and perpetual* obedience; and condemns for the least transgression in thought, word, or deed: for, *the thought of foolishness is sin*^g.—Where is the person, who can deliberately appeal to an heart-searching God, and say, I have fulfilled this law? I have never, in any instance, deviated from this standard of moral rectitude. For remember, if we could keep the whole law, except in one point, we should nevertheless be *guilty of all*^h; and the law will hold us prisoners, till ample satisfaction is made. The *law* does not say “repent, and you shall be forgiven.” It does not hold out the golden sceptre of mercy to a guilty creature, but denounces a dreadful curse against every transgressorⁱ. If your eyes are opened by the Spirit of God, as the Apostle’s were, you will see yourselves as he did,

^g Prov. xxiv. 9.

^h James ii. 10.

ⁱ Gal. iii. 10.

in miserable circumstances.—Rom. vii, 9, 10, 11.

Again, every natural man is under the dominion of some reigning lust, such as pride, covetousness, or love of the honours and pleasures of this world. Hence we read of *Eyes full of adultery*^k—*Hands full of mischief*^l—*A mouth full of cursing and bitterness*—*Feet swift to shed blood*^m—*and a Heart deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked*ⁿ. Satan also is the god of this world, who blinds the minds of them that believe not. Yes, my dear hearers, those persons who indulge themselves in sin, who neglect the worship of God in his house, and never pray to him in secret; such persons are the servants of Satan, and his wages they will receive, if they die without repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ^o. I speak thus out of love to your souls, if peradventure the Lord may bless what I say to some unconverted sinners, and bring them to ask

^k 2 Pet. ii. 14.

^m Rom. iii. 14, 15.

^l Psal. xxvi. 10.

ⁿ Jer. xvii. 9.

Luke xiii. 5.

John iii. 36,

with

with seriousness, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved* ^p?

We next inquire concerning the *price* paid for the sinner's redemption. This is a theme for Gabriel's tongue! The redemption of the soul appears precious, when we consider how it was obtained. Paul speaks with peculiar emphasis—*Ye are bought with a PRICE*: and Peter informs us—*It was not with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ*^q. This is sweetly expressed by Dr. Watts:

How glorious was the grace,
When CHRIST sustain'd the stroke!
His LIFE and BLOOD the Shepherd pays,
A RANSOM for the flock.

May this lead us to reflect upon the worth of our souls, and the importance of their eternal welfare^r.

I proceed to shew, by whom the price was paid. It was by *Jehovah*:—hence they are

^p Acts xvi. 30.

^q 1 Cor. vii. 23. 1 Pet. ii. 18. 19.
^r Mark viii. 36.

called the ransomed of the LORD. This should lead us, my brethren, to contemplate and adore the amazing grace which is herein displayed. *He is gracious, and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit, I HAVE FOUND A RANSOM*^a.

It was the LORD, whose law we have broken, whose authority we have trampled under foot, whose goodness we have often abused, whose mercy we have slighted, and whose everlasting displeasure we have all deserved. But, O amazing love! *He found a ransom. His own equal Son^c was manifest in the flesh, to destroy the works of the devil^u: and He gave HIMSELF for his people^w. Hence the saints before the throne, ascribe Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever^x. Observe, this grace is distinguishing. They are said to be redeemed from AMONG*

^a Job, 33. 24.

^u 1 John iii. 8.

^c John v. 18.

^w Titus ii. 14.

^x Rev. v. 11. 13.

men, and OUT OF every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation^r.

I go on,

II. To consider the glorious promise made them. First, That *they shall return to Zion with songs*; and secondly, That *everlasting joy shall be upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

First, *They shall return to Zion with songs.*—In this mode of speech is implicated their previous distance from God. This is very strikingly illustrated by our blessed Redeemer, in one of those parables, recorded by the Evangelist Luke, chap. 15. The youngest son, there spoken of, is an emblem of unconverted sinners. He left his Father's house, went into a *far* country, and wasted his substance with harlots; till at last, he was reduced to a most mean, miserable, and perishing condition.

Such was our condition. We have all departed from God, Isa. liii. 6. We were

^r Rev. xiv. 4. v. 9.

spending

spending our time and talents in the pursuit of sensual objects, till the Lord caused us to *feel* our misery, and *see* our wretchedness. The promise in the text, therefore, supposes a divine change in the disposition of the heart, which change is effected by the Almighty energy of the Holy Spirit^z. Have you, my dear friends, ever experienced a work of grace in your hearts? Have you been led with seriousness to adopt the prayer of the Publican, who smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful to me a sinner*^a? Or to say, with the Prodigal, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*^b. More than an outward reformation is absolutely requisite: a person may turn from the practice of enormous crimes, and yet not be a regenerate man. A swearer may abstain from that awful and crying sin, *Because of which the land of promise mourned*^c. A drunkard may refrain from abusing the bounties of divine Providence, and become a sober person. A sabbath-breaker

^z Eph. i 19.

^a Luke xviii. 13.

^b Luke xv. 21.

^c Jer. xxiii. 10.

may cease to profane that holy day, and attend to all the externals of devotion. Yea, one who has opposed the doctrines of the gospel, may change his opinion, and become a warm advocate for evangelical truth. Yet it is true of each of these, that the heart never having been renewed, they cannot enter the kingdom of God. All real religion, or vital godliness, is internal: *Christ IN YOU the hope of glory^a. My son, give me thine heart*, is the requisition of the blessed God^c.

Now it is *to Zion* they return.—Zion, in the sacred Scriptures, is sometimes to be understood of the Church Militant, and sometimes of the Church Triumphant. *Ye are come unto Mount Sion^f*, says the Apostle, and that striking passage of the Psalmist, which is literally to be understood of the pious Jews, and of their journey at the stated season to the temple, has often, with great advantage, been applied to the heavenly state. *They go from strength to strength,*

^a Col. i. 27.^c Prov. xxiii. 26.^f Heb. xii. 22.

every one of them in Zion appeareth before God^s.

Cheerful they walk with growing strength,
Till all shall meet in Heav'n at length.

In regard of coming to the Church of Christ on earth, the Holy Ghost intends more than a profession of religion. Not that *proper persons* should be discouraged from publicly appearing on the Lord's side. 'Tis the privilege of those, who really believe in the Son of God, to testify to the world, that they are not ashamed of Christ, who has bought them with his precious blood. But Jesus is the way to Zion: the ransomed of the Lord, therefore, return and come to Zion's King, agreeable to that precious promise: *The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the MIGHTY GOD^a.* They first return to Christ, and then to his Church. The Apostle reminds those to whom he wrote, *That they had been as sheep going astray; but were now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop*

^s Pf. lxxxiv. 7.

^a Isai. x. 21.

*of their souls*¹. All those who are taught of God, and led by the Holy Spirit, come to the fountain of Immanuel's blood for pardon and peace. They come, and receive by faith, that everlasting righteousness by which they are justified in the sight of God. Yea, they come to Christ, in order to receive all spiritual blessings from his never-failing fullness. John [i. 16. All those who, in this world, are led to Christ, and enabled to trust in him *alone* for complete salvation, shall at last come to mount Zion above: for—*He will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands**. In Heaven they shall all cast their crowns before the throne, and sing that delightful, never-ending song, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power*¹, &c.

As to the manner of their coming, it is said, they shall come *with songs*. But I would observe, that in respect of their first coming to Christ, they are brought with weeping and

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 25.

* John x. 28.

¹ Rev. v. 9—11.

supplication—weeping for sin, and supplicating for divine forgiveness: *Going and weeping, they shall go and seek the Lord their God^m.* In this way the Lord led her, who in the house of Simon, *stood at his feet behind him, weeping.* But when Jesus pronounced all her sins forgiven, and *bid her go in peaceⁿ,* her mourning was turned into joy! When the ransomed of the Lord return to Zion above, it will be with songs. *With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the King's palace^o.* Not merely with a song, but with SONGS. This respects the various blessings for which they will praise the God of grace. They shall praise him for all his providential goodness, which followed them through this world; praise him for distinguishing favour as his chosen people; praise him for redeeming love; and praise him for calling, pardoning, justifying, adopting, and sanctifying grace. Also for that strength by which they were enabled to persevere, till their race was ended, and their conflict over.

^m Jer. xxxi. 9. l. 4.ⁿ Luke vii. 38—50.^o Psa. xlv. 15.

They will then say, *By the grace of God I am what I am* ^P.

Before I dismiss this branch of the subject, permit me to ask you, in the most serious and affectionate manner, Do you believe on the Son of God? Did you ever experience godly sorrow, by looking to a crucified Saviour? And feel the burden of guilt removed by the application of atoning blood? You have had a recent proof of the uncertainty of human life. My honoured Father, I presume, when he rose in the morning, did not expect to be in *eternity* before the clock struck nine. May this instance of sudden death be sanctified to each of us!—I come now,

Secondly, In a brief manner, to consider the close of the text, which is expressive of the complete and eternal happiness of the people of God. *Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads—sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

On earth there is a mixture of joy and

sorrow. Hence we read of *Mourners in Zion*¹. The children of God, while in the body, mourn because of their own sins, and on account of the sins of others. *I beheld transgressors and was grieved*. They mourn at times under the afflicting hand of God, because of bereaving providences, and over the corruptions of their own heart. They are also exposed to the assaults of Satan, and sometimes mourn an absent God, saying, *O that I knew where I might find him*²! so as to enjoy his gracious presence. But *weeping shall only endure for a night*, sorrow and sighing shall flee away, and be succeeded with eternal light and pleasure, springing from the uninterrupted enjoyment of God in Christ. They shall obtain joy and gladness, not in a way of merit, but as Saul *obtained mercy*³, and as all the Saints *obtain like precious faith*⁴, which is the gift of God, and wrought in the heart by the effectual operations of the Holy Spirit.—I hasten to conclude, by first addressing a few words to the members of this church.

¹ Isa. lxi. 2, 3.

² Job xxiii. 3.

³ 1 Tim. i. 16.

⁴ 2 Pet. i. 1.

My dear Friends, the relation in which I stood to your late Pastor, forbids my speaking any thing very particular concerning him. I can say with pleasure, I believe *He was faithful unto death*, and is now gone to receive at the hand of Christ, *a crown of life!*^u

Your present circumstances are afflictive, yet be not overwhelmed with sorrow. Though our Fathers die, and the Prophets do not live for ever, yet Jesus lives, and the government is upon his shoulders. I pray that you may be enabled to pay a proper attention to the very seasonable exhortations addressed to you at the grave, by my much respected Brother^x. Unite in prayer to God. Hold fast the *Truth* you profess to have received. Walk in love, and, in due time, may the Great Head of the church send you another Pastor, who shall be a blessing to your souls! Remember, in your prayers, those persons who have lately made a public profession of their faith in Christ, and who were to have been received into fellowship with you next

^u Rev. ii. 10.

^x Mr. BURTON, of London.

Lord's day. O that the great Shepherd may keep, and comfort them continually !

My dear Brothers and Sisters, I speak with the most sincere affection toward you all. We have sustained a loss—we have no longer the affectionate prayers, nor serious and seasonable advice, of our honoured Father.—I, in particular, have reason to remember his counsel with gratitude, especially in regard to my present situation in London. I was under difficulties in respect of knowing the path of duty. After seeking divine direction, I came to ask his advice, which I was enabled to take, and I never saw more reason to be thankful for it than I do at present.—It affords me pleasure, that I can address you, at least most of you (for the pulpit is not a place to flatter) as persons who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ. But if any of you are without an experimental knowledge of the Saviour, O that you may be brought to his feet to cry for mercy, without which your souls must be miserable for ever ! And may we each of us be enabled to glorify God in this day of visitation !

I hope

I hope those serious persons, who have been used to attend the worship of God in this place, will, according to their ability endeavour to encourage the hearts, and strengthen the hands, of those who compose this church. They need your prayers and assistance, in order to the carrying on the interest of Christ here. I trust neither will be wanting. It may be, I have been speaking to many this evening, who have never been seriously concerned about their eternal welfare. I embrace the present opportunity of addressing a word to such persons. I am convinced, that nothing short of a divine Power can effectually reach your hearts. — Yet, as in the presence of God, I warn you to shun the ways of sin; for remember, that as rational, intelligent creatures, you are accountable to your great Creator. *If you live and die in you sins, where Christ is, you can never come^r.* JESUS is now revealed in the gospel, as a free, full, and Almighty Saviour! He invites those who labour and are

^r John viii. 21.

heavy

beaxy laden, to come to him, and they shall find
rest unto their souls: and him that cometh he will
in NO WISE CAST OUT^z. The gospel is a joy-
ful found to every truly awakened sinner,
when made known to his heart. O that you
may be taught by the Holy Spirit to know
your need of Christ, and may you be drawn
with loving kindness, to put your *whole* con-
fidence in Him! Amen.

* Matth. xi. 28. John vi. 37.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.

My late honoured Father, who died October 22, 1794, it appears, from a paper found in his pocket-book, dated 1783, was born in the year 1716. I believe, in Bedfordshire. At what age he removed into Kent, I am not certain, but he began to exercise his ministry in May 1748 : and was ordained Pastor of the Church at Seven Oaks, in October 1754. At the bottom of the above paper, he writes thus:—“ Few and evil have been the days of my pilgrimage, yet, *through grace*, I trust a *redeemed and saved* sinner. An unworthy servant, and minister of Jesus Christ, who has condescended to honour me with his presence and blessing ; so that my poor labours have not been altogether in vain. May I be supported unto the end of life, and made still useful. That when I am called to give an account of my stewardship, I may not only say with cheerfulness, *Behold I, and the children, which the*
Lord

Lord has given me;" but may I hear my Lord and Judge say, "Well done, good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

The following account was found among his papers, written by himself, and signed with the initials of his name. It was therefore thought advisable to print it as nearly verbatim as possible.

C

Some

Some Remarkable Passages of the great Goodness of God, as manifested towards a poor Sinner : noted with a view to excite Gratitude, Trust, Love, Praise, and holy Obedience to the Lord.

ON Friday, Sept. 18, 1747, the LORD was graciously pleased to manifest unto my poor distressed soul, his rich mercy, grace, and love in Christ, in such a manner I had never experienced before. I had, for a considerable time, been in great fear and doubt about my *state*, and my obtaining eternal salvation : fully convinced of my guiltiness, and condemnation by the righteous law of God, the insufficiency of my own (once favourite) righteousness, to save me ; and the absolute need I stood in of having the precious

cious blood of Christ applied to my soul, in order to the enjoyment of true peace, and a satisfactory view of my right and title to eternal glory.—That morning, I was exceeding low indeed, and sorely buffeted by Satan ; so that I seemed just ready to give up all hopes of eternal happiness. In this frame of mind I continued all that morning, till about eleven o'clock, when I found an unusual inclination to pour out my complaints to the Lord in prayer, and in which I was encouraged by those words, which at that juncture were suggested to my mind, “ Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find.” I think I can truly say, I was then enabled to believe the promise ; I therefore laid aside my tool (being then at work in my civil calling), and attempted to cry to the Lord, and to implore the manifestations of his rich mercy, grace, and love to me, a poor, miserable, self-condemned sinner.

I did so, and though strange to relate, yet a certain truth, that instead of mourning for sin, and crying to the Lord, I was seized with such a *sudden sleepiness*, that I lost the sense of my former troubles, forgot who I was

speaking to, and was almost ready to fall flat to the ground ! I rose from my knees, and began to reflect upon my conduct herein ; but, alas ! 'tis impossible to describe the grief and trouble my poor soul was filled with, on the account of my strange, wicked, and unaccountable conduct before the Lord.

After walking and musing a few moments, I thought I would try to pray again, concluding, that if the Lord, against whom I had sinned, did not help me, none else could. I again attempted to bow my knees before the Most High, and began at first with trembling, to confess my wickedness, and especially my *hypocrisy* in my late conduct before him ; and though (as I said before), it is very strange and unaccountable, that a *sinner, oppressed with the guilt of sin, and the fears of hell, should fall asleep in the presence of God !* Yet so to my grief I found it ; even when I was attempting to call upon him the *second time*.

I was now troubled more than before : and Satan sorely buffeted me with such suggestions as these, “ You see, now, what an hypocrite you are before God ! You pretend

tend to be troubled about sin, and to desire deliverance from it; but, *does this look like it?* You pretend to lay your troubles before God, and to ask his pardon and forgiveness; and yet, while you attempt to do this, you solemnly mock God, fall asleep, and quite *forget* your trouble, and the end and design of your pretended calling upon him; dreadful hypocrisy indeed! You have been a notorious sinner all your life-time, as your own *conscience witnesseth*; and, by your hypocritical pretences to be religious, you have only deceived others, aggravated your own guilt, and made yourself ten-fold more a child of hell than you was before. You may as well leave off praying, drop all pretences to religion, go back into the world, and take all the pleasure you can in it, for this is all the happiness you will ever have."

Thus was I buffeted, and sorely harrassed by the enemy, even almost to distraction, and total despair—walking about, wringing my hands, and weeping. But as the Lord would have it, the case of Peter's denying his Lord *thrice*, was brought to my mind; which immediately alleviated my grief and trouble, and brought me to reflect on the

case thus—"Did Peter deny his Lord thrice? He did. But I have denied him in a more dreadful manner, and without those *temptations* he was exposed to. But did Jesus look upon him with compassion, after he had denied him thrice, and pardon his repeated offences?—He certainly did. Well, who can tell, but there may be (after all that I have done) compassion in *his heart* towards such a vile wretch as I? He prayed for those that embroiled their hands in his precious blood, and forgave their sins. I will therefore venture a *third* time to call upon him, and, Oh, that I may obtain mercy in his sight!

I then kneeled down in the same place I had done before, and with a trembling heart, humbly implored the forgiveness of all my sins, and especially those I had so lately been guilty of: I also earnestly entreated the manifestations of his forgiving love to my poor troubled soul; and being encouraged by the former promise—"Ask, and ye shall receive, &c." I pleaded hard with the Lord, in the name of Jesus; nor did I find the least return of my former sleepiness; though still the enemy bore hard against me; but blessed be God, I was helped to resist him, and
continue

continue crying. After a few moments, the Lord was graciously pleased to give me a full and satisfactory answer.—I felt in an instant, what I had never before experienced, namely, such peace and joy in believing, as are unutterable. I could then say, without hesitation, “I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine.” And, “the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who *loved me*, and gave *himself for me*.”

The words made use of by the divine Comforter, to bring home these glad tidings to my poor heart, were those recorded in Matt. ix. 2. *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.* These words of the blessed Jesus, were applied with such power to my soul, though I heard no articulate voice, yet they continually sounded in my ears for several moments, “Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.” Yes, and I did then enjoy a sweet calm indeed! The Spirit of adoption was then given me, and I could cry, “ABBA, FATHER.”

After I arose from my knees, I found myself strongly inclined to set up my Ebenezer to the Lord; to write something as a memorial

rial of God's great goodness now bestowed upon me, a poor, vile sinner; and taking a piece of chalk, which I had with me in the barn (for I was then threshing of wheat), I began to write on the boards, without the least premeditation, and continued till I had finished the following verses, which seem exactly to describe the very frame of my soul at that time.

JESUS, thy name, I magnify,
Thy grace to me is given;
By faith, thy blood, I now apply,
And I am heir of Heav'n!

Thou, Lord, hast made my terrors cease,
And now I weep for joy;
Sweet Jesus, now thy name brings peace,
And I thy love enjoy.

Thrice happy ME! though once condemn'd
Through guilt and slavish fear;
Yet Jesus now his love extends,
Saying, "Son, be of good cheer."

"Thy sins, which many were indeed,
"Are all of them forgiven:
"For I, thy guilty soul have freed,
"And thou art Heir of Heav'n."

Thanks to thy name, dear Father, now
ME, to thy Son, thou'st given;
And I can now, to Jesus bow,
And join the Host of Heav'n.

Saying, "Worthy is the Lamb indeed,
"Whose blood for me was shed:"
And now the captive exile's freed,
And raised from the dead.

Jesus,

Jesus, my Lord, doth me receive,
With open arms above ;
And I, through grace, do now believe,
And taste his dying love !

Come, Holy Ghost, Comforter come,
And with me ever dwell ;
Oh, may I be thy constant home,
And thou my pledge and seal !

Whilst I was writing the above verses, an ancient man, and a professor of religion, came to the door (Master Skinner, a general Baptist, who lived in a house at the top of Green-lane), and who seemed to force his discourse to me ; but I was so intent on writing, that I could not attend to what he said, and had hardly time to answer him yes or no. So he gazed upon me awhile, and then left me to my scribble. I suppose he might think I was then fallen into a warm *fit of enthusiasm*, as we had conversed together before, about things which he neither understood nor believed.

I continued in a kind of rapturous joy for about two hours ; after which, the enemy returned, and beset me again, with this temptation : “ You seem much pleased, and very happy ; but you are still under a delusion. Your faith and joy are not of the right kind ;
they

they are only such as the Stoney-Ground hearers had; and therefore you are still in your sins, and will eternally perish." This temptation staggered me for a time; but having my sword with me, I mean a small Testament in my pocket (which I generally had with me in those days), I therefore drew it out, and earnestly begged of the Lord, to direct me to some passage that might fully satisfy me, whether I was yet under a delusion, or not. I then opened the book, and my eye was immediately fixed on those words recorded in Luke xi. 20. "If I, with the finger of God, cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you." This passage seemed so suitable to my case, that I thought I could not have been directed to such another in all the Bible. I was enabled to believe it for myself, and did then experience afresh, such satisfaction, delight, and pleasure, as cannot be fully expressed. By this also, the enemy was put to the flight, and I was experimentally taught, that he is a liar. And, I could then say, "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee!"

In the evening I left my labour, and went home

home rejoicing, as one that had conquered a formidable enemy, and taken great spoils. Though I well knew, that the *victory*, and the *riches* obtained by it, were not mine, but the Lord's. To Him, therefore, I wished to give all the glory, and wanted all I was in connection with, to help me praise him.

When I came home, I presently began to tell my wife and her father and mother, who had some spiritual light, though it was but little, and with whom my wife and I then dwelt: I began to tell them what the Lord had done for my soul; how he had answered my prayers; manifested his love to my soul; forgiven all my sins; and that I was now sure I was a child of God, and should go to heaven.

My wife, poor thing, was glad to see me so cheerful, knowing that I went out with a very heavy heart in the morning. But she thought I carried things rather *too far*; and was a little *extravagant* in my expressions, and *hasty* in my conduct. And though she had prudence enough to conceal her thoughts that night, and for a considerable time, yet she told me afterwards, with much concern, that she was so *foolish* and so *wicked* as to think, that

I was

I was a little elevated with liquor, which caused me to talk at random. Though she acknowledged, she well knew, that I never discovered the least inclination to drinking. However, she concluded, that my Master had given me a pint of his ale, which had made me merry, and caused me to talk as I did. But the real truth was, I had eat but little all day, and drank nothing but small beer. And yet, I was more joyful than if I had been filled with new wine.

In this happy frame I continued about three days : and though I worked very hard at the time, I did not seem to tire in my labour ; was quite resigned to the will of God in my station, and was cheerful, comfortable, and happy ! Yea, I was so carried above every thing of this world, that I scarce knew whether I was in the body, or out of it.

O may I never forget the infinite condescension, grace, and love of God to my poor soul. May I never dishonour him by ingratitude or unbelief. May Jesus be my resting-place, and may I live upon him, and with him for ever !



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